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**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**      México, D.F., April 17, 1944.

No. 17009

**SUBJECT: Transmitting Memoranda of Conversations with  
Mr. Lombardo Toledano by a Member of the  
Staff of the Embassy.**

**The Honorable  
Secretary of State,  
Washington, D.C.**

**Sir:**

I have the honor to transmit herewith memoranda covering two conversations which Mr. William K. Ailshie, a Secretary on the staff of this Embassy, recently had with Mr. Lombardo Toledano and at which were present also Mr. Alejandro Carrillo who, as the Department knows, works very closely with Mr. Lombardo Toledano.

I think the Department will find these memoranda of interest, particularly because of the statements which Mr. Lombardo Toledano makes to the effect that he is not against the participation of American capital in the industrial and agricultural development of Mexico but that on the contrary he favors American participation both in the way of capital and technicians above that of other countries and that he believes that such participation by us is desirable and necessary.

From time to time the Embassy has kept the Department informed concerning the activities of Mr. Lombardo Toledano and of his fundamental attitudes. Briefly it may be said that during the last years he has been losing considerable prestige among Mexican labor leaders and workers. It is for this reason that Mr. Lombardo Toledano has been endeavoring to increase his prestige among labor leaders and workers in the other American Republics and has undertaken these visits to the other American Republics. There is no doubt that his trips have had a certain useful effect in this connection because there is increasing evidence that labor leaders in a good many of the other American Republics are willing to look upon Lombardo Toledano as their spokesman. This increased prestige of Lombardo Toledano in the other American Republics in labor circles has had its reflex in Mexico where his prestige and influence have somewhat augmented in recent months.

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As the Department is aware, Mr. Lombardo Toledano is a very intelligent man with a very penetrating mind and is exceedingly well informed. There seems to be little doubt that he has peculiar fundamental convictions and that he is primarily an opportunist and that his principal quality is his ambition and his desire for leadership and power. This ambition for leadership and power does not necessarily take the form of wishing to hold public office but it is a very real desire for power. It is, I believe, in this ambition and desire that the reason for Lombardo Toledano's activities in the other American Republics must be sought.

The Department knows from the reports which it has received from our Chiefs of Mission in the other American countries which Lombardo Toledano has visited that he has consistently made speeches in favor of the democracies and of the attitudes in the war. While he has emphasized the importance of the Russian contribution to the war, he has at times in his public addresses made favorable and grudging references to the United States and its war effort. He has in these public addresses spoken in favorable terms of President Roosevelt but even in these same addresses has seldom failed to bring out references to "American imperialism" and its dangers. The Department is also aware from the reports of our Chiefs of Mission in the other American countries that wherever Lombardo Toledano has been he has usually had confidential meetings with leaders of labor and that in these confidential meetings he has made strong expressions with regard to the danger of American capital and American imperialism and has indicated that labor in the other Americas must unite against the infiltration of American capital.

The Department is also aware from recent confidential despatches of this Embassy that in several meetings on post-war planning in Mexico City, Lombardo Toledano has made statements with regard to the danger of American capital.

In the appended memoranda the Department will note that reference is made to a conversation which the President of Mexico has had with Lombardo Toledano. I discussed this matter with the Minister of Foreign Relations, Dr. Padilla, who informs me that when I brought to his attention the meetings said to have been held in Mexico City on post-war planning in which Lombardo Toledano made these statements with respect to the danger of American capital, the Minister brought this information to the attention of the President of Mexico. The President told the Minister that after receiving this information he had had a talk with Lombardo Toledano and gave him his own views with regard to the necessity of the participation of American capital and technicians in any industrial and agricultural development of Mexico. The President told Dr. Padilla that Lombardo Toledano had indicated that he was willing to go along with such a program of participation of American capital and technicians.

The political situation in Mexico, as in some other countries including our own, is somewhat confused at this

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time. In Mexico, as in our own country, Presidential elections are in prospect although they are further off than our own. There is reason to believe that the President of Mexico has reestablished a certain contact with Lombardo Toledano which he had formerly had but which for over a year had been interrupted. There is reason to believe that the President of Mexico feels that the activities of Lombardo Toledano can be somewhat controlled and canalized and that by his renewed contact with Lombardo Toledano he is endeavoring to do so. There is no doubt that the President of Mexico has made clear to Lombardo Toledano his own views with regard to the importance of the participation of American capital and technicians if Mexico is to make any progress in industrial and agricultural development, and which progress the President feels so essential for the future of the country.

The appended memoranda of conversations which Mr. Ailshie of this Embassy had with Lombardo Toledano must, therefore, be viewed in the light of the recent conversations which Lombardo Toledano undoubtedly has had with the President of Mexico. It would appear that Lombardo Toledano is endeavoring at least to render lip service to the idea of the participation of American capital, above other, in the development of Mexican industry and agriculture. So far Lombardo Toledano has not given any public expression to this idea. Whether he will do so in public, can only be determined by future developments.

It will be noted from the appended memoranda of conversations with Lombardo Toledano that he is very anxious to establish what he calls personal contact with me. In this respect I should like to say that whenever Lombardo Toledano has expressed any desire to see me I have always seen him and have been prepared to talk with him frankly. I have seen his principal associate, Mr. Alejandro Carrillo, much more frequently. I have never refused to see Lombardo Toledano and I have not avoided seeing him. On the other hand, as the Ambassador of my country in Mexico, I have not felt it desirable or proper that I should make any advances towards Lombardo Toledano or that I should have continuous contact with him for this would become a matter of public knowledge and would not, in my opinion, be conducive to our best interest. If it were known in Mexico that the American Ambassador had close and continuous contact with Lombardo Toledano, which is the form of contact which Lombardo Toledano desires, it would give a very wide impression in Mexico that the American Ambassador was interfering in the internal affairs of Mexico and this is something which in any Chief of Mission of our country in Mexico must meticulously avoid.

On the other hand, Lombardo Toledano desires to have a rather intimate and rather constant contact with me personally because of the use which he could make of such

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contact and there is no question from our knowledge of Lombardo Toledano of the use which he would make of such contact.

Lombardo Toledano has been named by the President of Mexico as the labor member of the Mexican Delegation to the meeting of the International Labor Office which is to be held very shortly in Philadelphia. This naming of Lombardo Toledano as the labor representative is in itself significant for he does not really represent Mexican labor among which he has lost so much prestige. The fact, therefore, that he has been named by the Mexican Government as a member of this four man Commission to represent Mexico at this meeting is an indication that the President has found it desirable to establish closer contact with Lombardo Toledano than he has had at least for the last year or more.

This Embassy is of the opinion and I am very much of the opinion that Lombardo Toledano has not changed any of his fundamental attitudes towards the United States or towards American capital. He is as distrustful of the United States as he has always been. While he claims that he is not a Communist and may not be a Communist, his interest is fundamentally in Soviet Russia rather than in any other country. His main purpose is to become the leader of Latin American labor and to exercise power as such. He is very much disturbed because he has never been able to establish close contact with Mr. Lewis and with certain leaders of the CIO. More recently, however, the leaders of the CIO in the United States have shown considerable distrust of Lombardo Toledano and lack of desire to work with him. It appears, therefore, that both the A.F. of L. and the CIO and American labor in general have little interest in Lombardo Toledano and in his ideas. This is undoubtedly one of the causes of preoccupation to Lombardo Toledano for his influence and capacity for leadership of labor in the other American Republics is hampered if he cannot establish more collaborative and sympathetic relationships with the leading labor organizations in the United States.

I am sending this information to the Department for its confidential background. While Lombardo Toledano is in the United States he will undoubtedly have contact with various people and will endeavor to have contact with various people in our Government. While it is not wise to refuse to have such contact, it should be kept as limited as possible because there is no question that the principal reason why Lombardo Toledano desires this contact is to advance his own personal position and to use such contact to advance such personal position. There is, however, no doubt that already he has acquired unusual prestige among labor leaders and labor organizations in a good many of the other American Republics which apparently are disposed to let Lombardo Toledano act as their principal spokesman. In any conversation which official persons in our Government may have with Lombardo Toledano, I would suggest that there be great caution for any statements which are made by anyone in conversation with him usually appear in one of his public speeches at unexpected moments. All of his speeches

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which are long and impassioned and improvised usually contain references to conversations which he has had with high persons and there is no statement which is made to Lombardo Teledano which he considers as a confidential one if it serves his purpose in one of his improvised addresses.

One of the principal things which some of the Latin American delegations and undoubtedly Lombardo Teledano will urge at this meeting of the ILO is the designation by all of the American countries of "labor attaches" in their various missions. What Lombardo Teledano is interested in and what some of these labor leaders are interested in is the establishment of such labor attaches for purposes ~~other than~~ <sup>of</sup> their own. I think there is a growing tendency, if not already approval, in our own Government of this idea of labor attaches. The Department is aware of my own opinion based on thirty years of experience in the Foreign Service that the appointment of labor attaches as such is undesirable but that the contact with labor matters and reporting on labor matters should be carried on by our missions by appropriate members of the staff of the mission and that this will be much more effective in every way than the designation of labor attaches and will have none of the serious inconveniences which will accompany in due course the designation of labor attaches. If our Government accedes to this idea and begins the designation of labor attaches, it will open the way for all of the American countries to do so.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosures:  
Memoranda

File No. 850.4 Lombardo Teledano  
GSM:MA  
To Department in original and four copies  
Enclosures - original and one copy only.